

Strategic Warning Staff

Washington, D.C. 20505

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S-0013/SWS

17 March 198

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR WARNING**SUBJECT: Memo on Future of SWS**

Subject memo reviewed and the following changes are recommended:

a. The memo is in need of a lead-in which sketches in some of the background. Recommend the following be placed before the existing 1st paragraph:

"In early 1979, the NIO/W prepared a paper for the DCI which explored potential roles for the SWS. The options presented ranged from abolishing the Staff altogether, through the transfer of some of its functions and personnel to the NIO/W staff, to considerably enlarging it and its area of responsibility. The option decided upon by the DCI and promulgated by DCID 1/5 (effective 23 May 1979) was the continued existence of the SWS pretty much as it was to assist the NIO/W in his responsibilities with regard to strategic warning. Implicit in the decision to continue the Staff was a requirement to pump new life into it and keep its performance under scrutiny with it in mind to once again review the question of its existence after an unspecified period of time."

b. The degree of consensus as to location is somewhat overstated in light of DIA's reservations. Recommend a change to the first line of the third tick point as follows:

". . . acceptable. There was a suggestion that unreimbursed participation by DIA in a Staff located at CIA Headquarters would be unlikely. Since . . ."

c. Recommend the following be substituted for paragraph 3:

3. Implementation of the points contained in the consensus would not be without risk. In a dissenting view, the Director, SWS made the following arguments:

-- In response to demands of the security policy making community, the Staff has been providing reasonable alternative hypotheses explaining events of major warning significance and, when published, such views were said to have been invaluable. When not disseminated beyond the intelligence community, these views have had little visible impact on the intelligence community and have not been reflected as warnings in the community's finished intelligence publications, often until almost overtaken by events. Based on this experience, the Staff does perform a useful function for the community by publishing reasonable alternative hypotheses.

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-- The existing Staff of [redacted] personnel is fully employed in following situations likely to involve significant security interests of the United States, especially where US-USSR confrontation might result. To broaden this mission, while at the same time reducing the number of people, would be counter-productive.

-- A semi-autonomous staff under the general supervision of the NIO/W provides the directed analytic support necessary to insure that the policy makers receive all reasonable interpretations of available evidence having important warning implications. At the same time, maintaining the Staff in a semi-autonomous status frees the NIO/W from substantive controversy within the community that might compromise his efforts in coordination of the overall community warning effort.

-- The warning function, as expressed in the DCID 1/5 and in the study by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, might be better performed with somewhat more publication by the Staff, by a closer relationship with the NIO/W, and by a closer relationship of the NIO/W with the DCI concerning the analysis done by the Staff. On the other hand, the Staff's experience with the community when its conclusions were not published suggests that, should the Staff no longer be involved in publishing as a separate entity, it is likely to become simply another current intelligence organization, but one that is unheard. Therefore, the SWS recommendation is to maintain an autonomous entity like the SWS, or if that is unacceptable, abolish the SWS, create no follow-on entity, and return the scarce analyst assets to the parent intelligence organizations.

[redacted]
for [redacted]
Director, SWS

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